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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/09/2016  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [SU](#) [UG](#) [CG](#)  
SUBJECT: SUDAN/UGANDA: MONITORS SAY LRA HAS DISPERSED FROM  
ASSEMBLY AREA

REF: KHARTOUM 2425

Classified By: CDA R. Powers, Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) combatants who had assembled at Owiny-Kibul just north of the Sudan-Uganda border have now dispersed, according to Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) chief Gen. Oyai Deng. Deng said at least one LRA group, under senior commander "Dominic" was reported near Juba. Deng said the SPLA had intercepted communications indicating that the group planned to cross the Nile from east to west at a point either north or south of Juba. He said the SPLA believes the group intends to attempt to reunite with LRA chief Joseph Kony somewhere in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

¶2. (C) Deng had just been briefed by SPLA General Wilson Deng, who had traveled to the Owiny-Kibul area with a group of observers from the LRA peace talks now underway in Juba. The talks are moderated by Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Vice President Riek Machar. The observers included representatives from the LRA, the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), the SPLA and leaders of the ethnic Acholi community in northern Uganda.

¶3. (C) The observers planned to brief Machar and the peace talks delegates on the evening of October 6. Separately, negotiators reported that discussion of a proposed "comprehensive" package of social and political reforms in Uganda had broken down. Machar was expected to brief the press on these developments.

¶4. (C) Privately, SPLA chief of staff Deng blamed both the LRA and the UPDF for the debacle. "The LRA are not serious," Deng said, "but Uganda made a big mistake in deploying near Owiny-Kibul." The UPDF had not "surrounded" the assembly point, Deng said, but had deployed in significant numbers to prevent the assembled LRA combatants from crossing back into Uganda or moving west to cross the Nile and reunite with other LRA forces in DRC. UPDF Fourth Division Commander Col. Charles Otema admitted on October 4 that the UPDF had deployed in significant numbers west of the assembly point to prevent a Nile crossing.

¶5. (C) It was not immediately clear how the UPDF or the SPLA would react to these developments. GoSS Vice President Machar told visiting Sudan Programs Group Director Lauren Landis September 29 that the UPDF, present in southern Sudan since 2002, had been "confined to barracks" for the duration of the peace talks.

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